

salutary effects for humanity, if only in view of the fact that his own countrymen were paying a terrible price, in corruption and misery, for their long habit of leaving politics in the hands of absolute kings and the mercenary tribe of place-hunters. But no; Montaigne was willing, for his own peace and that of mankind, that things should remain so, and left the world to make the best of it in resignation. Yet he was a revolutionist in spite of himself. The free self-development of the individual was incompatible with political stagnation, and the freethinker and the critic were destined to stir the world. Freedom from prejudice and from servility to tradition, of which Montaigne is the apostle—fruit of the intellectual Renascence, as we have observed—will yet produce some startling political results in France and elsewhere.

The freedom, which found in Montaigne its apostle, found in his contemporary, Etienne Dolet, its martyr. Dolct was born in the same year as Servetus (J.E., 1509), whom he resembled to some extent in character, and whom, unfortunately, he anticipated by a few years as the victim of religious bigotry. He was the martyr scholar, as Servetus was the martyr scientist and Giordano Bruno the martyr philosopher of the Reformation age. A native of Orleans, he laid the foundation of his high reputation as a scholar at the University of Padua, the most famous school of letters and freethinking philosophy of the age, whither he resorted in 1527 and where he spent three years. Like Servetus, he devoted a couple of years—from 1532 to 1534—to the study of law at Toulouse, the palladium of mediaeval orthodoxy at this period, where the Inquisition had stifled every reforming aspiration in its vice for three centuries. It was here that the troubles of a tragic life began. Toulouse was the worst possible environment for a man of Dolet's freethinking, pugnitive, irritable temperament. Unlike Servetus, and like Montaigne, he cared little for theology, and felt little temptation to engage in the quarrels of rival theologians, though he associated with ardent young Protestants like Jean de Caturce, whom the Toulouse inquisitors burned during his residence at the university, and sympathised, intellectually at least, with the Protestant party as the party of progress. lie was a scholar, not a religious reformer, and his contempt and hatred of the obscurantists,